

The cantata is in chiasmic form. Bach often used chiasmic (x-shaped/symmetrical) forms, in which center movements (where the mirror image begins) provide the crux of the matter. There antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text). Alfred Dürr writes, "In substance, the text is linked to the first part of the Sunday Gospel. Asked which is the greatest commandment of the Law, Jesus replies, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and will all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment; and the second is alike, namely: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Hence movements 2–5 are concerned with the love of God and movements 6–7 with the love of one's neighbour." See "The Cantatas of J. S. Bach," p. 572. The text is indebted to Johann Olearius (1611–1684, whose commentary was in J. S. Bach's personal library.

See Martin Petzoldt *Bach-Kommentar*, 1:527.

Cantata No. 169

Cantata for Alto with brilliant organ obbligato taken from a previous work.

Gott soll allein mein Herze haben

(Apparently adapted from a nonextant instrumental work, as was also BWV 1053/1 (concerto for harpsichord). For an alternate theory, see note at no. 5.

1. Sinfonia

Viol. I

NBA I/24; BC A143

18. S. after Trinity (BWV 96, 169)

*1 Corinthians 1:4–9 (Paul's prayer of thanks for the blessings of the Gospel in Corinth)

*Matthew 22:34–46 (Jesus identifies the greatest commandments and asks the Pharisees whose Son Christ is)

Librettist: Christoph Birkmann (see note below).

FP: 20 October 1726

(Leipzig: St. Thomas) from Leipzig cycle III (see image & note)

Instrumentation:

Ob d'amore I, II

Taille

Vin I, II

Vla

SATB

Organ obbligato (see note)

Continuo

Eric Chafe suggests that Bach often associates the forms and styles of instrumental music with the "world" (see note).



D major

Although the autograph score shows that Bach added the sinfonia after writing the rest of the cantata, its head-motive fortuitously bears a striking resemblance to the beginning of no. 2, whose scalar figure in turn is inverted to become the head motto of no. 3. The sinfonia thus reinforces an inner thematic unity as well as clarifies the chiasmic structure. See Petzoldt 1:528.

Christoph Wolff suggests that the original model for movements 1 and 5 was a keyboard concerto (see note).



4

D major

D7

G major

A7

7.

A

Org.

piano

A7

B minor

A7

D major

10

Organ obbligato + continuo...

E7

A major

A7

D major

D major

13

Ob.

(piano)

Viol..

Va.

E7

A major

B7

E7

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16

Tutti

(forte)

A major A7 D major

19

D major D major D7

22

Ob. *piano* Viol., Va.

G major A7 D major E7 A major

25

B

Viol.

A major B7 E major E7 A major

28

(forte)

F# minor A major A major A major

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31

A major A7 D major E7

34

F# minor E7 F# minor A major A# dim.7

37

F#(7) B minor B minor B minor

40

B minor B minor B minor C#7

43

F# minor F# minor C#7 F# minor

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46

Viol., Va.

Org.

F# minor D major D major

49

Tutti

piano

forte

D major D7 G major

52

A7 A7 D major D major

55

D major D major

58

D major D7 G major A7 B minor A7

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61

D major D major B minor

Ob., Viol. unis.

64

A7 D major B7 E minor

Ob. I

67

D# dim.7 E minor E minor

69π

E minor

Ob.

72

E minor E minor

+Viol.

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75 **F**

E minor F#7 B7 E7 A major

Ob., Viol., Va.

77 **II**

C#7 F# minor D7 G major

Viol. I Ob. I

80

G major G major

83

forte

Ob. Org.

G major G major E minor

85 **II**

Viol. Va. Ob., Viol.

D# dim.7 E minor A# dim.7 F# major B minor

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88

B7 E7 A major B7 E minor F#7

90 II

B minor B minor

93

D# dim.7 E minor E minor F#7

95 II

F#7 D# dim.7 B7 E minor

98

C# dim.7 A7 D major F#7 B minor B minor B minor

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101

Viol. I, Ob. I

F#7 B minor B minor B7 E minor B minor

103 II

B minor

B minor

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled '103 II'. The score is written for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The key signature is B minor, indicated by two sharps (F# and C#) on the treble clef. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line is written on a single staff with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves, a treble and a bass clef. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two measures of the piece. The second system contains the next two measures. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the vocal line has a more melodic, flowing character. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the second measure of the second system.

106

B minor D7 G major

108

F#7 B minor
F# pedal...

110

110 F# pedal...

B minor B minor B minor Da Capo B minor

Although the autograph shows that Bach added the sinfonia after writing the rest of the cantata, its head-motive bears a striking resemblance to the beginning of no. 2, whose scalar figure in turn appears as an inverted devise (motto) in no. 3. Furthermore, as Alfred Dürr writes, "The librettist ingeniously links the introductory arioso-cum-recitative, no. 2, with the aria that follows [no. 3] by prefacing each part of the bipartite recitative with a line of text from the aria. Each portion of the recitative text thus forms an interpretation of the motto that precedes it, and it also ends with the opening line of the aria." See *The Cantatas of J. S. Bach*, 572.

169/2.

2. Arioso

• Loving God alone despite the world's wooing (169/2).

Rondo-like form

The interpolation of 3 contrasting arioso sections (which anticipate the words of the following aria but go beyond the libretto's structure) points to Bach's desire to create a quasi-dialogue. See David Schulenberg in J. S. Bach, *Oxford Composer Companions*, ed. Malcolm Boyd (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 202.

For biblical background, see note.

Ritornello

Continuo alone...

D major

D7

G major

A7

D major

D major

Alt

The first line of text is the same as that of the devise (motto) from no. 3, mm. 9–10, with the scalar figure inverted.

Gott soll al - lein
God's self a - lone

mein Her - ze ha - ben al - lein,
my heart pos - sess - eth a - lone,
Text painting: Rest follows "God...alone."

Gott soll al - lein mein Her - ze ha - ben.
God's self a - lone my heart pos - sess - eth.

[Ritornello]

D major

D7

G major

A7

D major

17

(Recit.)

The recitative interprets the previous line (= line 1 of no. 3).

Zwar merk ich an der Welt,
In vein the world a - round,
Indeed, observe I of the world,

die ih - ren Kot un - schätz - bar
would in its serv - ice have me
which in its dirt as-priceless

Text painting: Descending line for "ihren Kot" (i.e., the mud/dirt of the world), followed by rising line for "unschätzbar hält" ("considers it to be priceless").

F# major

F#7

A# dim.7

For word-for-word English translations, see Unger, *Handbook to Bach's Sacred Cantata Texts*.

19

hält, weil sie so freund - lich mit mir tut,
bound and friend - ly doth my love in - vite,
holds,

sie woll - te gern al -
sup - pos - ing that its

B major

B7

E major

21

lein das Lieb - ste mei - ner See - le sein.
wiles the feal - ty of my heart be - guiles.

Doch nein!
Not so!

E7

A major

A7

23 **A (Arioso)**

23. Gott soll al - lein, mein Her - ze ha - ben: ich find in ihm,
 God's self a - lone, my heart pos - sess - eth; I find in Him,

[Ritornello material]

D major D7 G major A7 D major

29 ich find in ihm, ich find in ihm das höch - ste
 I find in Him, I find in Him my sur - est

E7 F# minor E7 A major

34 (Recit.) The recitative interprets the previous text line.

Gut. Wir se - hen zwar auf Er - den hier und da ein Bäch - lein
 stay Man's earth - ly lot en - joy - eth, here and there, a ti - ny
 NBA: dar

A major B major B7

36 der Zu - frie - den - heit, das von des Höch - sten Gü - te quil - let;
 rill of hap - pi - ness that from God's gra - cious boun - ty flow - eth.

Text painting: Rising streams of notes for "God is the fount from which blessings flow."

E minor A# dim.7 B minor

38 Gott a - ber ist der Quell, mit Strö - men an - ge - fül - let, da
 But God Him - self's the Source and Fount whence man's soul draw - eth re -

D major D7 G major

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40

schöpft ich, was mich al - le - zeit kann satt - sam und wahr - haf - tig la - ben.
 fresh - ing draughts of bless - ed - ness, and him to life and wealth re - stor - eth.

A7 F#7

42

B (Arioso)

The movement ends with a three-fold statement of the motto text with internal repetitions of "allein" ([God] "alone").

Gott soll al - lein, — Gott soll al - lein, — Gott soll al -
 God's self a - lone, — God's self a - lone, — God's self a -

[Ritornello material]

B minor A7 D major B7 E minor E minor C major

47

lein, al - lein, mein Her - ze — ha - ben, Gott soll al - lein, al - lein
 lone, a - lone, my heart pos - sess - eth, God's self a - lone, a - lone,

D7 G major G major A7 D major

52

(Recit.)

A final statement of the motto text is sung as declamatory recitative.

mein Her - ze — ha - ben. Gott soll al - lein mein Her - ze ha - ben.
 my heart pos - sess - eth. God's self a - lone my heart pos - sess - eth.

D major D major B minor E# dim.7 F# minor F# minor

169/3. 3. Aria

• Loving God alone; he is the highest worth (169/3).

Virtuosic organ obligato

Ritornello

D major D major

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3

D major E major A major

4II

A major A7 (B7) E minor E minor

6

A# dim.7 F#7 B minor D major

7II

D major D major

This is called a "Devisenarie" (a term coined by Hugo Riemann) or "motto aria." After the ritornello, the singer presents the first phrase of the aria as a kind of motto. This is followed by a short instrumental bridge before the aria proper begins. The motto sets the tone (and the literary perspective) for the movement.

9.

Gott soll al-lein mein Her - ze ha-ben,
God's love a-lone my heart pos-sess-eth,

The organ obligato responds to the voice, filling out the entire compass as if representing the fullness of the heart.

The motto's scalar figure is a free inversion of the opening motive of no. 2.

7

D major

For biblical background, see note.

11II

D major

13

Gott soll al-lein mein Her - ze ha - ben, ich
 God's love a-lone my heart pos-sess - eth, I

D major D major

Martin Petzoldt notes that the librettist's use of "das höchste Gut" (i.e., the "summum bonum") uses language of Natural Theology. See Bach-Kommentar 1:528-529.

15.

find in ihm das höch - ste Gut, das höch - ste
 find in Him my sur - est stay, my sur - est

E7 A major

Text painting: Ascending scales for "the highest good."

17

Gut, ich find in ihm das höch - ste, das höch - ste
 stay, I find in Him my sur - est, my sur - est

A major

19 B

Gut; Gott soll al -
 stay. God's love a -

A major A major

21

lein mein Her - ze ha - ben, Gott soll al -
lone my heart pos - sess - eth, God's love a -

F#(7) B minor B minor D7

23

lein mein Her - ze ha - ben, Gott soll al -
lone my heart pos - sess - eth, God's love a -

G major D major D major

25

lein mein Her - ze ha - ben, ich find in
lone my heart pos - sess - eth, I find in

D major D7 G major E minor

27

ihm das höch - ste, das höch - ste Gut, ich find in ihm das
Him my sur - est my sur - est stay, I find in Him my

A7 D major

29 C

höch - ste, das höch - ste Gut.
sur - est, my sur - est stay.

30^{II}

E minor D major B7

32

E minor A7 F#7 B minor

33^{II} B Section.

D

Er **liebt** mich in
In want and need

Alliteration: "liebt" — "leben": both words receive melismas.

35

der bö - sen Zeit und will mich in der Se - lig -
He's - by my side; in heaven a - bove He - will pro -

B minor E7 A major

37

keit mit Gü - - - tern sei - nes Hau - ses la - - - -
vide the boun - - - ty - that my soul de - sir - - - -

A major C#7 F# minor

39

- - - - ben. - - - Er liebt - - - mich, er
eth. - - - In want and need, in

C#7 F# minor

41

liebt - - - mich in - - - der bö - - - -
want - - - and need - - - He's by - - - -

F# minor C#7 F# major F#7

42II

- - sen - Zeit und will mich in der Se - lig - keit mit
my - side, in heaven a - bove He - will pro - vide the

B minor E# dim.7 C#7 F# minor

44

Gü-tern sei - nes Hau - ses la - ben, mit Gü - tern
boun - ty that my soul de - sir - eth, the boun - ty

E7 C#7 F# minor F# major F#7

46

sei - nes Hau - ses la - ben,
that my soul de - sir - eth,

B minor E# dim.7 C#7 F# minor F# minor Da Capo

This is the central (pivot) movement in the cantata's chiastic form, where antithetical elements meet or are paradoxically inverted (formal inversion reflects an aspect of reversal or turning in the text). Here God's love is said to close hell but open heaven (mm. 5-6). The line is similar to that in the penultimate movement of the St. John Passion: "Das Grab...macht mir den Himmel auf und schließt die Hölle zu" ("The grave opens heaven to me and closes hell.")

See also the last line of 96/2.

Seco 4. Recitativo • Love of God fully satisfies, closes hell & opens heaven to us (169/4).

169/4.

1.

Alt

D B

G E

A C

F#

Chromatic saturation in the vocal part in 9 mm.

Was ist die Lie-be Got-tes? Des Gei-stes Ruh, der Sin-nen Lust-ge-nieß, der
What ist God's love pro-vid-eth? Man's peace of mind, the heart's full hap-pi-ness, the

Bc. Continuo alone

G major G major

For biblical background, see note.



4

See - le Pa-ra-dies. Sie schließt die Höl - le zu, den Him-mel a - ber auf. Sie
soul's ec - stat-ic bliss! By it hell's power's con-fined and heaven is o-pened wide. As

D# dim.7 E minor F#7 B minor



7

E#

ist E-li-as'Wa-gen, da wer-den wir in Him-mel'nauf in A-brams Schoß ge-tra-gen.
once of old E-li-jah, by it one day to heaven we'll ride and find there rest for ev-er.

NBA: im

E major E7 A major D# dim.7 F# minor F# minor

Unusual Form (Rhyme: AbcabAcB)
Ritornello (mm. 1-6) Bm
Lines 1-5 (7-14) Bm-F#m
Rit (15-20) F#m
Lines 6-8 (21-26) F#m-F#m
Lines 2, 8-7-8, 2.1 (27-39) Bm
Ritornello (39-45) Bm

169/5.

5. Aria

(Apparently adapted from a nonextant instrumental work, as was also BWV 1053/2 (concerto for harpsichord).
• Love of God practiced; love of world put to death (169/5).

Viol. I, II
Va.
For biblical Org. obl.
background, Bc.
see note.



1. Viol.
Va.
No oboes.
Ritornello

B minor A# dim.7 B minor B7 E minor C#7

In the concerto, BWV 1053, the movement is called a siciliano. A lament for the death of the world and its loves, it is reminiscent Peter's aria "Erbarme dich" (no. 39) in the St. Matthew Passion. See note for more.

For an alternate theory suggesting that the vocal version predated any instrumental version, see Konrad Küster, ed., *Bach Handbuch* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999), pp. 327–328. See note for more.



F# major D# dim.7 B7 E minor N6 A# dim.7 B minor



The aria paraphrases 1 John 2:15–17 (see note).

Lines 1–5.

Stirb in mir, stirb in mir, Welt und al - le
Die in me, die in me, earth and all thy

Org.

Organ obbligato in duet with singer.

B minor B minor D major A7

9π

dei - ne Lie - be, stirb in mir, daß die Brust sich auf
glit - t'ring beau - ty! Die in me, all my heart here be -

B-flat major G# dim.7 A7 D minor D major B minor E7 C#7

Text painting: Chromatic inflection to D minor fits the text "die in me."

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12

Er - den für und für in der Lie - - - be Got - tes ü - - -

low till I - pass thence, shall to God - - - ful - fil its du - - -

F# minor N6 C# major C#7 F#7 B minor E# dim.7

tr

14

be!

ty!

Ritornello

Viol.

Va.

F# minor F# minor F# minor (F# pedal...)

B

16

E# dim.7 F# minor F#7 B minor G#7 C# major C# minor A# dim.7

19

Lines 6-8.

Stirb in mir, -

Dead to me, -

Org.

F#7 B minor G major E# dim.7 F# minor F# minor D major F# minor

22

- stirb in mir, Hof - - fart, Reichtum,

- dead to me, all that's not of

F# minor D7 G major B# dim.7 G7

Word painting: Rising scale & chord progression for pride/haughtiness.

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24II

Aug-en-lust, ihr ver-worf-nen Flei-sches-trie-be,
God a part, car-nal, vain, im-pure, and pet-ty!

C# minor A# dim.7 D major B minor F# minor iv6 V Phrygian cadence F# major

Opening text returns but without line 1 "Stirb in mir" ("die in me").

27

Lines 2, 8-7-8, 2, 1.

Welt und al-le dei-ne Lie-be, Welt
Earth and all thy glit-tring beau-ty, earth

B minor B minor B minor

Organ with "Stirb in mir" theme...

29

D Line 8.

und al-le dei-ne Lie-be, ihr ver-worf-nen Flei-sches-trie-be,
and all thy glit-tring beau-ty! Car-nal, vain, im-pure, and pet-ty!

F#7 B7 G#7 C# major E minor 6 A# dim.7

Text painting: Twisting chromatic line for "verworfenen Fleishestriebe" ("warped/reprobate impulses of the flesh").

31

Lines 7-8.

Hof-fart, Reich-tum, Aug-en-lust, ihr ver-worf-nen Flei-sches-
All that's not of God a part, car-nal, vain, im-pure and

F#(7) B minor B minor G major C#7

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33 Line 2.

trie -
pet -

be, Welt und
ty, earth and

A# dim.7 F#7 B minor E7 A minor D7 G major

35 Line 1.

al - le dei - ne Lie - - - be! **Stirb** in mir,
all thy glit - t'ring beau - - - ty! **Die** in me,

Organ and voice in unison.

F#7 B minor major D# dim.7 E minor

37

stirb in mir,
die in me,

stirb in
die in

F#7 B minor E# dim.7 (C#7) F#7

39 **E**

mir!
me! Ritornello

Viol.
Va.

B minor B minor B7 E minor C#7

42

F# major F# minor D# dim.7 B7 E minor C major A# dim.7 B minor B minor

6. Recitativo

•Loving one's neighbor required of those who love God (169/6).

169/6.

1.

Alt

For more biblical background, see note.



Doch meint es auch da - bei mit eu-rem Näch-sten treu, denn so steht
And show your neigh-bour too, a love that's fast and true. For thus 'tis

Continuo alone...

A major A7 D major

3II

in der Schrift ge - schrie-ben: du sollst Gott und den Näch-sten lie - ben.
writ-ten in the scrip - ture: "Thou shalt love both thy God and neigh-bour."

B minor E7 A major B7 A major A major E major

(See also 197/5.) •Loving one's neighbor: Prayer for divine help (169/7). This is the third of four stanzas in the 1524 chorale "Nun bitten wir den Heiligen Geist" by Martin Luther (1483–1546). The chorale serves as catechismal response, addressing God as love personified.

7. Choral

1.

Sopr.

+Ob d'am I, II Du sü - ße Lie - be, schenk uns dei - ne Gunst, laß uns emp - fin -
Vln I O sweet-est Love, un - to us grant al - way a mind ful - filled

+Vln II Du sü - ße Lie - be, schenk uns dei - ne Gunst, laß uns emp - fin -
O sweet-est Love, un - to us grant al - way a mind ful - filled

+Taille 8 Du sü - ße Lie - be, schenk uns dei - ne Gunst, laß uns emp - fin -
Vla O sweet-est Love, un - to us grant al - way a mind ful - filled

Baß Du sü - ße Lie - be, schenk uns dei - ne Gunst, laß uns emp - fin -
O sweet-est Love, un - to us grant al - way a mind ful - filled

For biblical background, see note.



Tutti

A major A major A major

5

den der Lie-be Brunst, daß wir uns von Her-zen ein-an-der lie-ben
with thy char-i-ty! That each may his neigh-bour hold as his broth-er.

A major C# major F# minor F# minor D major E7 A major D major

Text painting: For the words "And continue of one mind in peace" Bach uncouples the voices from one another until agreement at the cadence.

NBA: Kyrie eleis

10.

und in Frie-den auf ei-nem Sinn blei-ben. Ky-rie e-leis
in one mind and heart for ev-er dwell-ing. We be-seech Thee, Lord!

E minor A(7) D# major B(7) E major B minor F# minor A major E major E# dim.7 A major